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## PRESS RELEASE

# Orange Park Man Charged After Mailing Multiple Machinegun Conversion Devices

Monday, March 15, 2021

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### For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Middle District of Florida

Jacksonville, Florida – Acting United States Attorney Karin Hoppmann announces the return of an indictment charging Kristopher Justinboyer Ervin (41, Orange Park) with possession of an unregistered machinegun conversion device. If convicted, Ervin faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison.

According to court documents, in January 2021, an agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives received information that Ervin may be selling devices referred to as “auto-sears” on a website called AutoKeyCards.com. Auto-sears are also sometimes referred to as “lightning links.” An auto-sear is a combination of parts designed and intended for converting a weapon to shoot automatically more than one shot, without manual reloading, with a single trigger pull, and is therefore a machinegun under federal law. All machineguns are required to be registered in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record.

Agents with ATF and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service purchased multiple items from AutoKeyCards.com consisting of metal cards etched with a design for an auto-sear. The

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paid for the metal cards etched with a design for an auto-sear using postal money orders, which Ervin then deposited into his account at a local credit union. An ATF expert analyzed one of the devices that had been purchased undercover and was able to convert an AR-15 style firearm into a machinegun by cutting out the etching for an auto-sear using a commonly available tool and then inserting the auto-sear into the firearm.

On February 22, 2021, agents surveilled Ervin as he delivered 22 packages to a post office in Orange Park. A Postal Inspector obtained warrants to search the 22 packages and found that each of them contained a metal card etched with an auto-sear design. A Postal Inspector was able to see that Ervin had created labels for more than 1,200 mailings that appeared to contain auto-sear devices.

On March 2, 2021, Ervin was arrested in Columbia County, Florida. Search warrants were executed on Ervin's vehicle and residence, resulting in the recovery of \$3,700 in cash, approximately 1,552 auto-sear devices, machinery that was used to manufacture the auto-sear devices, other firearms, computers, and packaging materials consistent with those Ervin had used to mail packages containing auto-sears. Ervin's websites have been seized by ATF.

An indictment is merely a charge that a defendant has committed one or more violations of federal criminal law, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation, and the Columbia County Sheriff's Office. It will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Laura Cofer Taylor.

This case is also part of Project Guardian, the Department of Justice's signature initiative to reduce gun violence and enforce federal firearms laws. Initiated by the Attorney General in the fall of 2019, Project Guardian draws upon the Department's past successful programs to reduce gun violence and enhances coordination of federal, state, local, and tribal authorities in investigating and prosecuting gun crimes. For more information on Project Guardian visit [www.justice.gov/projectguardian](https://www.justice.gov/projectguardian).

*Updated March 15, 2021*

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